



Plenary sitting

B9-0100/2023

8.2.2023

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to Question for Oral Answer B9-0000/2023

pursuant to Rule 136(5) of the Rules of Procedure

on the EU priorities for the 67th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women
(2022/2839(RSP))

Robert Biedroń

on behalf of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

B9-0100/2023

European Parliament resolution on the EU priorities for the 67th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (2022/2839(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the 67th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women and its priority theme ‘Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls’,
- having regard to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 15 September 1995 and the outcomes of its review conferences,
- having regard to the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,
- having regard to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the principle of ‘leaving no one behind’ and, in particular, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 which seeks to achieve inclusive and quality education, SDG 5 which seeks to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, SDG 8 which seeks to achieve sustainable and economic growth, SDG 9 which seeks to significantly increase access to information technology, SDG 10 which seeks to ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities and SDG 13 on climate change, providing for the possibility of tackling the root causes of gender inequalities and thus strengthening women’s resilience to climate change,
- having regard to the United Nations General Assembly resolutions of 16 December 2020 entitled ‘Intensification of efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls’ (A/RES/75/161) and ‘The right to privacy in the digital age’ (A/RES/75/176),
- having regard to the United Nations Human Rights Council resolution of 5 July 2018 entitled ‘Accelerating efforts to eliminate violence against women and girls: preventing and responding to violence against women and girls in digital contexts’ (A/HRC/RES/38/5),
- having regard to the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime of 23 November 2001,
- having regard to the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence of 11 May 2011 (‘Istanbul Convention’),
- having regard to the Council conclusions on ‘Women, Peace and Security’ of 10 December 2018,
- having regard to the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative aiming at eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls,

- having regard to Articles 21 and 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
 - having regard to the EU action plan on digital education for 2021-2027,
 - having regard to the EU action plan on gender equality and women’s empowerment in external action 2021–2025 (GAP III),
 - having regard to the EU Gender Equality Strategy for 2020-2025 of 5 March 2020,
 - having regard to its resolution of 17 April 2018 on empowering women and girls through the digital sector¹,
 - having regard to its resolution of 21 January 2021 on closing the digital gender gap: women’s participation in the digital economy²,
 - having regard to its resolution of 10 June 2021 on promoting gender equality in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education and careers³,
 - having regard to its resolution of 14 December 2021 with recommendations to the Commission on combating gender-based violence: cyberviolence⁴,
 - having regard to its resolution of 3 May 2022 on reaching women’s economic independence through entrepreneurship and self-employment⁵,
 - having regard to Article 157(4) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union(TFEU),
 - having regard to the question to the Council on the EU priorities for the 67th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (O-000004/2023 – B9-0000/2023),
 - having regard to the question to the Commission on the EU priorities for the 67th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (O-000005/2023 – B9-0000/2023),
 - having regard to Rules 136(5) and 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the motion for a resolution of the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality,
- A. whereas gender equality is a fundamental principle of the EU enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union and Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights; whereas gender mainstreaming is therefore an important tool for integrating this principle into all EU policies, measures and actions, including its external action;

¹ OJ C 390, 18.11.2019, p. 28.

² OJ C 456, 10.11.2021, p. 232.

³ OJ C 67, 8.2.2022, p. 137.

⁴ OJ C 251, 30.6.2022, p. 2.

⁵ OJ C 465, 6.12.2022, p. 54.

- B. whereas 189 countries across the world, including the European Union and its Member States, committed to working towards gender equality and empowering all women and girls at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995; whereas SDG 5 of the Sustainable Development Agenda adopted by UN Member States in 2015 sets 2030 as the deadline for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls; whereas SDG target 5b specifically identifies the enhanced use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technologies (ICTs), to promote the empowerment of women and girls;
- C. whereas the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action stressed that it is essential for women not only to benefit from technology, but also to participate in the process from the design to the application, monitoring and evaluation stage, and underlined the link between biased teaching and girls being often discouraged and deprived of basic education in mathematics and science and technical training; whereas gender-sensitive education benefits entire societies by contributing to overall societal well-being, economic growth and innovation; whereas gender stereotypes negatively impact girls' self-confidence to pursue studies in STEM- and ICT-related subjects, hampering their ability to work in better-paid high-growth sectors; whereas gender-sensitive education and training are crucial tools for combating harmful gender stereotypes; whereas 2023 is the European Year of Skills and should emphasise the shortage of women in STEM careers and education;
- D. whereas UN Secretary-General António Guterres has described digitalisation as one of two seismic shifts that will shape the 21st century, the other being climate change; whereas meaningful access to digital services has become critical for inclusive social and economic engagement;
- E. whereas 62 % of men use the internet compared to only 57 % of women; whereas while the gender digital divide has been narrowing across all regions, women are still digitally marginalised in many of the world's poorest countries and especially in remote and rural areas, with at least 1.7 billion women in the Global South still unconnected⁶; whereas this gap exists irrespective of a country's overall ICT access levels, economic performance, income levels or geographic location and widens as technologies become more sophisticated and expensive⁷; whereas bringing an additional 600 million women and girls online could boost global gross domestic product (GDP) by as much as USD 18 billion⁸;
- F. whereas only a gender-responsive digital transformation can provide the necessary opportunities for changing negative gendered patterns of employment; whereas women still face structural and cultural barriers when participating in all aspects of the digital transition, which can have a detrimental effect on their access to and position in the labour market; whereas women are currently underrepresented in better-paid high-growth sectors, such as ICT and STEM occupations, while being overrepresented in

⁶<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2020/The-digital-revolution-Implications-for-gender-equality-and-womens-rights-25-years-after-Beijing-en.pdf>.

⁷<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/CSW67%20EGM%20Draft%20Concept%20Note.pdf>.

⁸<https://www.itu.int/women-and-girls/women-in-ict/>.

unpaid and precarious work⁹; whereas the low number of women working in innovative and disruptive technology sectors can adversely impact the design, development and implementation of new technologies, thereby causing the replication of current discriminatory practices and stereotypes, including the development of gender-biased algorithms; whereas it is important for women and girls to be an integral part of the digital transformation process so they can become key actors of innovation and technological change while reaping its full benefits;

- G. whereas female students now outnumber male students globally and whereas 54 % of university graduates in 2019 were women¹⁰, while only 18 % of women in tertiary education are pursuing STEM studies, compared to 35 % of men¹¹; whereas a large number of women abandon their higher level education and careers in the STEM sector or do not pursue academic opportunities in the sector due to unequal gender roles in family life, including unequal sharing of unpaid caring responsibilities between women and men within the household, a poor work-life balance, organisational constraints, harassment and bias in the workplace and lack of opportunities for career progression; whereas a lack of diversity in STEM sectors and professions will affect the profitability of companies and economic prosperity, potentially leading to them losing out on a EUR 16 billion GDP boost to the European economy by not encouraging women to participate in the digital sector;
- H. whereas according to the International Labour Organization (ILO) women are paid about 20 % less than men globally; whereas the gender pay gap in male-dominated sectors, such as ICT and technological companies is even larger; whereas women earn around 28 % less than their male colleagues in the same tech roles¹²;
- I. whereas women's economic independence and empowerment is central to achieving gender equality and to guaranteeing women's rights; whereas this includes the ability to participate fully in society, including by having control over their own time, lives and bodily autonomy, by achieving self-fulfilment and having equal access to labour markets, civic participation and economic decision-making at all levels; whereas the promotion of economic independence requires recognising and compensating feminised labour sectors that are systematically underpaid and undervalued and implementing appropriate measures to ensure women's equal participation in labour markets, equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, access to decent work opportunities and sharing and recognition of domestic and care responsibilities;
- J. whereas women facing multiple intersectional forms of discrimination have particular difficulty entering the STEM sector; whereas women in poverty and women in areas with limited infrastructure, especially rural areas, experience digital, gender and rural discrimination and barriers in access to and use of digital technologies, due to unaffordability, low digital literacy and negative social norms;

⁹ EPRS briefing, *Beijing Platform for Action: 25-year review and future priorities*, 27 February 2020, available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI\(2020\)646194](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI(2020)646194).

¹⁰ UNESCO-IESALC and Times Higher Education, *Gender Equality: How global universities are performing*, 2022.

¹¹ UNICEF and the International Telecommunication Union, *Towards an equal future: Reimagining girls' education through STEM*, UNICEF, New York, October 2020.

¹² <https://www.womenintech.co.uk/women-technology-survey-2019>.

- K. whereas only a marginal percentage of venture capitalists, business angels and investors are women; whereas significantly fewer women are working within these roles and as founders and owners of private companies and start-ups;
- L. whereas the gender dimension of the digital transformation is acknowledged in the EU's Gender Equality Strategy for 2020-2025 and the Gender Action Plan III; whereas promoting women's equal access to the untapped potential of digital technologies is central to the EU's digital strategy and to sustainable growth;
- M. whereas gender-based violence is not limited to physical violence, but also includes gender-based cyberviolence; whereas it is estimated that one in ten women have already experienced a form of cyberviolence since the age of 15¹³; whereas during the COVID-19 pandemic, gender-based violence increased exponentially, including online and ICT-facilitated violence; whereas the World Wide Web Foundation survey conducted in 2020 among respondents from 180 countries revealed that 52 % of young women and girls have experienced online abuse and 64 % of respondents stated that they know someone who has experienced it;
- N. whereas one in five girls (19 %) have left or significantly reduced their use of a social media platform after being harassed, while one in ten (12 %) have changed the way they express themselves¹⁴; whereas more than a third (37 %) of girls who are from an ethnic minority and have suffered abuse say they are targeted because of their race or ethnicity, while more than half (56 %) of those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex or queer LGBTIQ+ say they are harassed because of their gender identity or sexual orientation;
- O. whereas the rise of new smart devices and the internet of things provides further opportunities for technology-facilitated abuse;
- P. whereas education is key to preventing gender-based cyberviolence, including through digital literacy and skills such as cyber hygiene and netiquette, as well as to building a gender-inclusive educational environment that addresses gender stereotypes, which should be a key element of any public policy aiming to tackle gender-based cyberviolence; whereas technology can play an important role in the prevention of cyberviolence;
- Q. whereas the development of new ways of working and teleworking possibilities pose a series of challenges and opportunities for women and their work-life balance; whereas the development of new options of distance learning provides new possibilities for women and girls to bridge the digital and education gap;
1. Addresses the following recommendations to the Council:
- a. to reconfirm the EU's unwavering commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action and subsequent review conferences and to the range of actions for gender equality

¹³ <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/cyber-violence-against-women-and-girls>.

¹⁴ <https://plan-international.org/news/2020/10/05/abuse-and-harassment-driving-girls-off-facebook-instagram-and-twitter/>.

they outline;

- b. to ensure the full involvement of Parliament and its Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality in the decision-making process on the EU's position at the 67th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women and to ensure that Parliament has adequate information and access to the EU position document ahead of the negotiations;
- c. to ensure that the EU shows strong leadership and takes a unified position on the importance of empowering women and girls in all their diversity and achieving gender equality in the digital transformation; to take strong action to univocally denounce the current backlash against gender equality, including policies and attempts to undermine women's rights, autonomy and emancipation in every field; to support calls for the standardisation of women's rights;
- d. to condemn in the strongest terms the use of rape and sexual violence as a weapon of war in armed conflicts, specifically their ongoing use in the unjustified attack on Ukraine by Russia, as well as other conflicts such as in the Tigray region in Ethiopia; to condemn all forms of gender-based violence, including cyberviolence, as well as all forms of gender-based discrimination, as these are violations of human rights that prevent achieving gender equality and therefore truly equal societies;
- e. to pledge its strong support for the work of UN Women, which is a central actor in the UN system for advancing the rights of women in all their diversity and bringing together all relevant stakeholders in order to generate policy change and coordinate actions; to call on all UN member states, together with the EU, to ensure adequate funding for UN Women;
- f. to reaffirm the commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls made at relevant UN summits and conferences, including the International Conference on Population and Development and its programme of action and the outcome documents of its reviews;
- g. to highlight the need to facilitate and increase women's access to information and education worldwide, including in science, technology and economics, thus enhancing their knowledge, skills and opportunities; to underline the importance of ensuring gender mainstreaming in digital education at all levels and the need to abolish the digital gender divide together with any gender-related discrimination in access to education at all levels, from early childhood to higher education, in formal, non-formal and informal settings and from planning infrastructure to training teachers; to underline that broader human and economic development is necessary for overcoming digital inequality and achieving the full potential of women and girls worldwide;
- h. to advocate for improved access of girls, women and people with diverse gender identities to universally accessible, safe and secure digital connectivity, reaching out to the rural and remote areas;
- i. to highlight the need to ensure the universal and full access to online information

on sexual and reproductive health and rights, including the right to safe and legal abortion, and to ensure robust processes that prevent any personal data from being used against persons seeking abortion;

- j. to reiterate the need to enhance women's and girls' inclusion and participation in society; to reiterate the need to accelerate progress in gender equality, including through the promotion of laws, policies, budgets and institutions that advance gender equality; to also reiterate the need for greater investment in gender statistics, since less than half of the data required to monitor SDG 5 is currently available;
- k. to note that the post-pandemic recovery needs to take place in line with the green and digital transitions, and that STEM competences are set to play an ever more essential role in the future economy;
- l. to take into account that responses to the COVID-19 pandemic have accelerated the digital transition and that the future of work will see an increase in the demand for technology professionals; to note in this context that there is continuing gender segregation in ICT education and ICT occupations and that thus the digital divide could be further deepened if not appropriately addressed;
- m. to ensure that any policies connected with the digital transition take into account gender specific needs and do not negatively affect women, girls and people with diverse gender identities; to show greater commitment to the collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data, including but not limited to gender, income, education, employment and age in order to allow informed and innovative policies, which are required to better understand and regulate the digital space if there are to be more equitable outcomes, and also to the collection and analysis of data on marginalised groups to capture the situation of people facing multiple discrimination;
- n. to reiterate that women's economic independence and empowerment is central to achieving gender equality and guaranteeing women's rights; to underline the importance of access for women in all their diversity to emerging job opportunities in the digital transition with a view to ensuring that jobs in STEM are equally beneficial and accessible to all; to underline the need to support women's entrepreneurship while addressing the gender norms and stereotypes that steer women and girls away from technology; to emphasise the need to support women digital innovators across multiple industrial ecosystems in order to build an inclusive digital economy; to fight against gender stereotyping and to promote more female role models, which deeply affects girls' and women's opportunities for finding a career in STEM and other digital-related roles, and to promote increases in the number of women in leadership positions in the digital sector;
- o. to underline the importance of addressing the diverse representation of women in online platforms and social media, through a better understanding of the related technology, digital skills as well as access to digital means; to stress the importance of this as helping women's participation in peace and security matters;
- p. to work with the United Nations to ensure that the Global Digital Compact to be

adopted in 2024 and aiming to outline shared principles for an open, free and secure digital future for all is gender-sensitive and takes into account the specific needs of women and girls in the digital transformation, leaving no one behind;

- q. to underline that gender-based cyberviolence is often a continuation of offline gender-based violence and that all effective policy considerations must take into account this reality; to reiterate the need for effective policies and measures to prevent, combat and criminalise all forms of gender-based violence, including online; to acknowledge the importance of taking account of the overlap between gender-based cyberviolence and human trafficking based on sexual exploitation of women and girls; to support calls to put an end to sexual exploitation online, including sex trafficking and other forms of assault and abuse of women and children;
- r. to promote awareness-raising campaigns, training and educational programmes, including on digital education, literacy and skills, which should also target the younger generation, to combat gender-based cyberviolence;
- s. to strengthen international efforts to fight against the impunity of perpetrators of gender-based cyberviolence; to stress the need to look for legal and sociological solutions for all instances of online and technology-facilitated gender-based violence, taking account of issues such as non-consensual distribution and manipulation of intimate images and information, the use of deepfake technologies to generate harmful images, online hate speech, cyber harassment, cyberstalking, cyberbullying, hacking, identity-theft and sharing content without consent; to promote access to and the use of ICT as tools to combat gender discrimination and gender-based violence, as well as to achieve appropriate work-life balance;
- t. to point to the need to protect democracy and human rights in the digital space, such as freedom of expression, the right to privacy and data protection; to underline the dangers posed online to women human rights defenders (WHRDs), women politicians, journalists and other women and LGBTIQ+ activists, as cyberviolence and harassment is often instrumentalised in attempts to silence women's voices; to promote efforts to protect them;
- u. to advocate for stronger regulation of online platforms, with particular focus on the protection of women's rights and elimination of gender-based violence online;
- v. to emphasise the need to protect and promote the rights of groups experiencing multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination, including women with disabilities, racialised women, including Black women and women of colour, migrant and ethnic minority women, older women, women with lower education levels, women with health problems, single mothers and LGBTIQ+ women in rural and depopulated areas; to work to promote the concept of combating multiple discrimination and to integrate intersectional analysis throughout all UN bodies, as well as in the EU and its Member States;
- w. to ensure that any policies connected with the digital transition take into account gender-specific needs and do not negatively affect women, girls and people with

diverse gender identities;

2. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the EU Special Representative for Human Rights.